

For Immediate Release:
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Rep. Earl Blumenauer and Rep. John Campbell Introduce Taxpayer Protection Amendment to "Sandy" Relief Bill

Washington, DC – Today, Congressman Earl Blumenauer (OR-3) and **Congressman John Campbell** (CA-45) offered an amendment to H.R. 152, the Disaster Relief Appropriations Act of 2013, which would protect federal taxpayers from being burdened with an unfair share of the cost of projects extending beyond those specifically assisting victims of Hurricane Sandy.

Most beach renourishment projects take place under a 65% federal, 35% nonfederal cost-share agreement, with continuing replenishment cost-shared at 50% federal. These projects are often done at the urging of local communities and most of the benefits flow locally, so it makes sense for those communities to pay a share of the cost. However, an amendment offered by Congressman Frelinghuysen (NJ-11) would waive the 35% nonfederal share for many of these projects and could be interpreted to go even further and raise the federal cost share for continuing replenishment projects from 50% to 100%.

The Blumenauer-**Campbell** amendment clarifies language in the Frelinghuysen amendment that could inadvertently waive the nonfederal cost-share for ongoing construction projects unrelated to Hurricane Sandy. Any waiver of local cost-share for these projects should be limited to the funds provided in H.R. 152.

“We need to rebuild,” said Congressman Blumenauer, “but we also need to make sure that taxpayer dollars are being spent wisely , and not on projects that could be ongoing for 10, 20, 50 years and have nothing to do with the damage inflicted by Sandy.”

“This amendment is a simple, yet very important clarification that shields the American taxpayer from picking up the tab for ongoing and even future construction projects along the Northeastern seaboard that have absolutely nothing to do with the damage caused by Sandy,” said Congressman Campbell. “It’s a common sense amendment that ensures federal funds are restricted solely and specifically to the recovery efforts for which they are intended.”

Most beach renourishment projects are literally “under construction” for decades. For example, according to the Congressional Research Service, beach renourishment projects, “generally remain as active Corps construction projects for up to 50 years, because their initial construction, which often consists of a constructed dune or beach, is followed by regular “renourishment” activities (i.e., replacement of sand).”

“Waving the local cost-share for completion of ongoing beach-nourishment projects is not only fiscally irresponsible, it also decreases local communities’ appropriate obligation to be involved in and support projects that benefit them,” continued Blumenauer. “Our amendment simply clarifies that the waiver only applies to the funds in the bill.”

This amendment is supported by National Wildlife Federation, Taxpayers for Common Sense, the Reinsurance Association of America, the Association of State Floodplain Managers, the Water Protection Network, and the R Street Institute.

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